

GOD IN NATURE AND IN REVELATION

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“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”
Psalms 19:7-9

[Another sermon by C. H. Spurgeon upon the first clause of verse seven is #2870, Revelation and Conversion]

WHAT I have to say this evening will really be an exposition of the whole psalm, I have only selected these three verses for the convenience of having a short text. The psalm begins upon a high note, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” Only let the film of unbelief be taken from our eyes, and we shall see that everything in the great temple of nature proclaims the greatness and the glory of God. Only let the naturally deaf ear be unstopped, and there will be heard voices, mysterious yet clearly intelligible, revealing that God is still here working in providence, as of old He wrought in creation.

It seems to me that those persons, who think that Christians are not to be delighted with the wonders and beauties of the natural world, differ very widely from the psalmist whose words we are considering. One truly excellent man, whom we all very highly esteem, declared that when travelling up the Rhine, he did not look at the landscape because he desired to have his thoughts completely taken up with spiritual things.

I cannot condemn the good man, yet I think that as I am dwelling in my Father’s house, I ought to take delight in my Father’s works, and I must be a strange sort of child if I think it is a token of my affection for my Father not to care to look at the garden which He has laid out or the house which He has built. While earnestly exhorting you to be spiritually minded, I would remind you that it is just as easy to be spiritually minded with your eyes open as with your eyes shut to all the beauties of nature by which you are surrounded.

There are two things in the psalm about which I am going to speak, the first is *a parallel intended*, and the second, *praise expressed*.

I. First, there is A PARALLEL INTENDED.

This parallel was suggested to my mind while reading Bishop Horne’s Commentary upon this psalm. He confesses his acknowledgment to some older author for the idea. The parallel is this, David first extols the revelation of God in nature, and then extols the revelation of God in His Word, and he seems to imply that there is a likeness between the two revelations, that they are, in fact, two books of the same revelation or two parts of one great poem.

In reading David’s remarks concerning the heavens, we may truthfully apply them to the Scriptures. *Like the heavens, the Scriptures declare the glory of God, and like the firmament, they show His handiwork*, only that while the firmament shows God’s handiwork in creation, the Word of God shows that same handiwork in redemption, in that new creation by Him who says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

Consider first the vast expanse of the heavens. Who can measure the great curtain which God has stretched out as a tent to dwell in? Who knows the height thereof or the breadth thereof? Where are the compasses that can describe this wondrous circle? And the Scriptures are just as expansive as are the heavens, no man has yet compassed all the truth of divine revelation. As we look up to the great doctrines that tower above us like the high mountains, we may well say, "They are high, we cannot attain unto them." The length and breadth and depth and height of Scripture all surpass the comprehension of mortal men, and though we do unfeignedly believe and devoutly rejoice in them, it is not within the range of our powers fully to comprehend them.

There are some persons who talk as if they knew the whole circle of divine truth, they think they have put the great ocean of revelation into the small measure of their mental capacity, but you know, dear friends, that it is not so. No man will ever be able to hold the heavens in his hand or to compass the firmament with a span, but even could he do this, he would still find that the Word of God in all its wondrous immensity was too vast for him to grasp.

We must hold firmly whatever we have learned of the truth of God, but we must always be prepared to learn more. To say of my Bible that I have attained to every height that it reveals, is as foolish as to say that I have reached the highest degree of spiritual life that is possible.

Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," and when I have striven my utmost to know the Word of God, I still feel that I have need to pray, "Teach me Thy statutes, O LORD, and enlarge my understanding that I may know more and more of Thy truth!" For expanse, for loftiness, for brightness, for glory, the Scriptures are comparable to the heavens which declare the glory of God, and to the firmament which shows His handiwork.

Then the psalmist goes on to say, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge," and so, *the revelation of God in the Scriptures is always speaking to men*. Let them turn to it whenever they may, it has a message for them at all seasons. When we are happy and rejoicing, it has a voice for our brightest day, and when we are mourning and sorrowing, it is the comfort of our darkest night.

During this long night of the church's history, the long night of her Lord's absence, His true ministers are enabled to shine as stars in His right hand, and many a sorrowful spirit is cheered, and many a mariner upon the sea of life is guided by their light. By and by, the blessed Sun of righteousness shall again arise with healing in His wings, and then throughout the long and bright millennia day, and afterwards throughout that everlasting day to which there shall be no night, we shall continue to learn more and more of the wonders of that revelation which He has given us in His Word.

One great glory of the heavens is that they have a voice to all lands, "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." In a language understood by all the sons of men—not in the language of the Jew or of the Gentile only, not in the language of the barbarian or the Greek alone, but in the language of all alike, ancient and modern, bond and free—the voice of the heavens has gone forth the wide world over declaring the glory of God.

So is it with the Gospel, no matter where you introduce it, its message is adapted to all the sons of men. Paul proved the power of the Gospel among the idolaters of Lycaonia and among the sages of Greece. It has a voice for men of all temperaments, it speaks with equal authority to the sturdy Anglo-Saxon and to the more volatile Frenchman. It has a peculiar facility for adapting itself to all nationalities, it is neither the Gospel of the Englishman alone, nor of the American, nor of the African, but it speaks to—

"All people that on earth do dwell."

Wherever the Bible goes, it appears not as an exotic, but as a home grown flower, and whenever the Gospel is preached, it comes, not as a revelation from the East, or the West, or the North, or the South, but as God's message to all mankind in the whole world.

The glory of the Scriptures is like the glory of the heavens, "in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun," and *in the Word of God there is a tabernacle for the Sun of righteousness*. It is within the truths of divine revelation that Jesus Christ abides as the sun does in its proper sphere. What would the heavens be without the sun, and what would the Scriptures be without the Sun of righteousness? I may truly say of the Bible—

***"Here I behold my Savior's face
Almost on every page."***

The glory of the Gospel is that in it God is revealed as manifest in human flesh, all the divine attributes are displayed in the person of Emmanuel, God with us. Take Jesus Christ away from the Gospel, and its power is gone, and take Jesus Christ away from the Christian ministry, and it becomes utterly powerless.

I am grieved to have to say it, but I believe that it is because there has been so little preaching of Christ in many of our pulpits that the hearers have been driven off to Romanism and to all sorts of errors. The human heart needs some supreme object of affection, and it can never be satisfied with philosophical essays, or discussions about morality, or similar themes which have wasted hundreds of Sabbaths and made the services of the sanctuary a weariness to God's people. Oh, that there were more preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified! If He be lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him, and He must be lifted up, or else the preaching is a mere sham, a joy to devils, but to none besides.

David next very expressively says of the sun, "which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber," and is not this a true picture of Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures? He compared Himself to a bridegroom during His earthly ministry, and this is His relationship to His church, which is "the bride, the Lamb's wife."

He is here said to be "coming out of his chamber," as He came out of the council chamber of the divine decree, saying, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"—coming out of the chamber of the divine and invisible, and dressing Himself in the humble robes of our humanity—coming to a life of sorrow and suffering, yet coming to it with joyous steps because He delighted to do the will of God, and was charmed to redeem His spouse from death and hell—then later, coming out of the chamber in which He had concealed the glories of His deity during the three and thirty years of His sojourn among men, and now, coming out of His chamber continually as His Gospel is faithfully proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verily, this is a true picture of Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures, "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber."

It is also a picture of Him as a champion, "and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race"—"as a strong man"—not as a weakling, panting and struggling to stay on the track, but as a strong man rejoicing because he knows that he shall victoriously reach the goal. Coming forth in the Gospel, Sabbath by Sabbath, and week by week, our Lord Jesus Christ does not come forth to be defeated.

He does not come forth, as some of my brethren seem to imagine, needing their proofs of His existence and deity, or their apologies for His Gospel, but He comes forth to achieve His everlasting purposes, that He may be able to say to His Father at the last even as He said when here upon the earth, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

Like a strong man rejoicing to run a race, He is confident that He shall reach the goal, and win the prize. It is a long race, a toilsome race, a race in which there are many competitors, but as Jesus looks at them, He knows that He will beat them all, and that the crown of victory shall surely be His.

I hope some poor troubled soul will be comforted by the next verse of the psalm, “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the end of it.” The light of the sun reaches even the ice-caves of the frozen North, and it pours down its shining rays most lavishly upon—

“India’s coral strand,”—

and—

*“Where Afric’s sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand.”*

So is it in the going forth of Christ in His Gospel, “His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it.” The light of His Gospel shines upon all ranks, and all classes, and all characters, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, and the time shall come when it will shine over the whole world, for—

*“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall grow and wane no more.”*

Then the psalmist adds, “and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” The heat of the sun finds out the little flower in the darkest glade of the forest, and no doubt it exerts a mysterious influence even in the depths of the sea, and at the bottom of the deepest mines. “There is nothing hid from the heat thereof,” even though much is hid from the light thereof.

So is it with the Gospel and with the love of Christ. Where some of you are tonight, you may imagine that you are hidden from the heat of the Savior’s love, but is it so? You hear the Gospel, do you not? That is something, but you say that you want to find the Christ who has His tabernacle in the Gospel. But that very desire of yours proves that you are not hidden from the heat of the Savior’s love, for that desire is one of the gifts of His grace. If you have any brokenness of heart, any consciousness of guilt, any inclination towards repentance, this is the work of Christ through His ever blessed Spirit.

The flower does not know that it could not bloom without the sun, but it is true. Perhaps it thinks that the sun has too much to do in watching over the wide expanse of sea and land, and in seeing its beams reflected from the glittering palace roof, to notice one poor little harebell in a glen or one primrose hidden away in a mossy bank, but it is not so.

The sun sheds its beams upon all, and is none the poorer for doing so, and so is it with the love of Christ. If you feel even a longing after Him, that is a proof that you are not hidden from the heat of His love. Breathe this prayer again and again, “Jesus, Thou glorious Sun of righteousness, shine on me, and fill me with Thy grace!”

As the heliotrope is said to turn its face to the sun, so turn your face to Christ. I have noticed that flowers which grow in that part of the garden which is much in the shade always try to twist themselves into the sunlight if they can, and you have probably noticed that when you have flowers at your windows at home, they always try to grow towards the glass. Do seek, especially if you are a believer, to grow towards the light, and most of all to grow towards Christ who is *the* Light, the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness. Try to catch as many of His heavenly beams as you can.

Remember that the sun is none the less glorious because he gives so many of his beams to the flowers, and Jesus Christ will be no loser by the gift of His grace to you, the Sun of righteousness will be just as bright and just as glorious as before, nay, He will be all the more glorious as His glory is displayed in you.

I want you, then, to look upon the Word of God with great reverence and affection because therein is set a tabernacle for Jesus Christ. If you would learn all that you can concerning Jesus Christ, you must diligently study the Word which reveals Him to us.

II. Having spoken upon the parallel intended, I now turn to our second subject which is PRAISE EXPRESSED.

I remind you again that I am giving an exposition rather than preaching a sermon, and I very much question whether it would not be better if we more often expounded Scripture rather than gave utterance to so many of our own words and thoughts.

In speaking in this psalm concerning the Word of God, David uses six different expressions to describe it, and to each one he attaches a special encomium to commend it to us. As a rule, the ungodly know the Bible only by one name or perhaps two, they call it the Bible or the Scriptures, and that is about all that most of them know concerning it, but a man who is well acquainted with its contents has many names for it.

The most notable instance of this is the 119th psalm, which contains one hundred seventy-six verses, almost every one of which has a mention of the Word of the Lord. It would be a profitable exercise to read that long psalm through carefully, and to note all the variations of expression that the psalmist uses concerning the Scriptures as far as they were known to him, but for our present purpose it will suffice if we confine our thoughts to the six descriptions and encomiums that we find in this nineteenth psalm.

First, David says, "*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.*" In the margin, we have the word "doctrine" as another rendering of the word law, and we know that the term "the law of the LORD" is not restricted to the Decalogue, so we shall not do wrong if we apply this expression to the Gospel which is God's special means of converting souls, and to the whole revelation of God's plan and method of salvation which we find in the Scriptures.

If I want to know how I am to be saved, I come to this blessed Book, and I read here, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which Paul said had made him free from the law of sin and death. I read here Christ's own words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I read here the matchless story of Him on who I am to believe, I read about His person, His character, His doctrine, His mission, and this "law of the LORD" begins to operate upon my heart as I read it.

It not only changes my outward actions, but it renews my mind, it alters the whole bent and purpose of my life, in David's phrase it converts my soul. The springs of my being, which once were poisoned by sin, become purified by grace. I know that you have found this to be true, beloved, and that therefore you love this "law of the LORD."

McCheyne says that it is God's Word, and not our comments upon it, that saves souls, and I have frequently noticed, in conversions, that it has not been so much the word of the preacher that has been blessed as the Word of God, itself, though this, of course, is a rule to which there are exceptions, for our Lord Jesus Himself said, in His great intercessory prayer, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word"—not only through Christ's own word, but through the truthful and faithful testimony of His servants, and still is the word of earnest, believing preachers and teachers blessed to their hearers and scholars.

Yet the great converting agency is the Word of God, for this "law of the LORD is perfect," there is nothing in it in excess, and there is nothing omitted from it. It is perfect in all its operations upon my nature, perfect to inspire my whole life and to kindle enthusiasm in my soul, perfect to enlighten my understanding and to subdue my will, perfect for everything which is needed for the conversion of my soul.

David next says, "*The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*" I take this word "testimony" to mean the revelation of Himself which God has given us in His Word. He gives testimony to His own Fatherhood and to His adoption into His family of all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ. He gives testimony to all His attributes as they are revealed in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gives testimony to His own everlasting love, and to His faithfulness to every promise which He has made to His elect. He gives testimony to many things which we could never have discovered from nature, and all His testimony makes the simple wise.

Over the porch of one of the academies in Athens was written, "He that is ignorant of arithmetic may not enter here," but over the porch of God's Word is inscribed, "He that is ignorant is welcome here." "The testimony of the LORD" is full of divine wisdom, yet it is put into such plain language that even children can understand it, so the simple come to it that they may be made wise, and often, that which is hidden from the wise and prudent is revealed unto babes, for so it seems good in God's sight.

I take the Word of God, then, as first of all teaching me how my soul may be converted, and then, being converted, I come to this blessed Book with quite another objective, not to find out how I am to be saved, but that I may learn more concerning the God who has saved me, and as I read His testimony with regard to Himself, it makes my simple soul wise.

When I have got as far as that, I need something more, and David next says, "*The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart.*" By this word "statutes" I understand the Lord's ordinances of decree, the King's royal edicts and mandates, and also His promises, which are a transcript of His decrees. David says that these "statutes of the LORD are right." Of course they are, because they are His statutes, and that they cause the heart to rejoice, a statement we can confirm from our own experience.

I have often confessed that when my spirit gets depressed, nothing will sustain it but the good old-fashioned Calvinistic doctrine. You may be content with the fare set before you by the modern school of preachers when you are not hungry, you may enjoy it when there is fine weather, but when storms of tribulation are howling around you, when you are conscious of a great need of soul-satisfying food, then I do believe that the old Augustinian doctrine, which is the doctrine of the apostle Paul and of His Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, is the only fare upon which your heart can feast with rejoicing.

How sweet it is, at such a time, to fall back upon the eternal purposes of God in Christ Jesus! To know one's calling and election sure, to know that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," this is indeed "a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined."

King Lemuel's mother said, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts," and in a Spiritual sense, it is the strong drink and the nourishing wine of the doctrines of grace that can alone sustain those who are spiritually ready to perish and heavy of heart.

There are some who would agree with David as far as we have gone, but they are not so eager to listen to his next sentence, "*The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*" Being converted, a man learns all he can of the testimony of the Lord, then his heart rejoices in the statutes of the Lord, and he goes on to get further enlightenment from the commandment of the Lord.

Some persons never seem to have their eyes enlightened because they neglect to obey the Lord's precepts. Disobedience is sure to bring its own punishment, and there are some who cannot clearly read their own interest in Christ because their neglect to keep His commandments has closed their eyes just as a cloud of dust might have done.

There is a great reward for those who obey His precepts, and although we are saved by grace, and not by our works, yet in the economy of grace there are certain rewards which are only given to them who diligently keep the King's commandments. Happy are they who, like Caleb, follow the Lord fully, surely they shall be among the virgin souls that, in the heavenly mount Zion, "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

David next mentions a very practical matter, "*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever.*" Some kinds of fear are anything but clean, "The fear of man" has been a foul snare in which many have been captured for the devil. Compromise is very popular today, but the Bible is a most uncompromising Book, and "the fear of the LORD" is a most uncompromising principle. Once let this gracious fear thoroughly permeate our souls, and we shall never lose it, for David truly says that it endures forever.

If ever a man is really dead, buried, and risen with Christ, there is no fear of his ever undergoing such a backward process as being dead with Christ and then alive again to the world. There are some principles which are only powerful for a time, but the principle of grace, which produces the fear of the Lord, exerts a permanent influence upon everyone in whom the Holy Spirit works it, and there is no

possibility of the love of the world or the fear of man casting it out. May that gracious Spirit work this holy fear in each one of us!

Then lastly, David says, *“The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”* Whenever I think of the judgments of the Lord in the olden time, I always regard them as righteous judgments. Just wast Thou, O Lord, when Thou didst pour down the fiery hail upon Sodom and Gomorrah, when Thou didst smite Pharaoh and overthrow his hosts in the Red Sea, and when Thine angel slew the army of Sennacherib! Just hast Thou been, O God, in overturning ancient monarchs which had become hoary in iniquity! And these are “the judgments of the LORD” which are yet to be executed, concerning which we have the repeated declarations of revelation that they will all be “true and righteous.”

These are the very words that are used concerning the Lord’s judgments upon that great harlot which has corrupted the earth with her fornications. With this blessed Book in our hands, and especially if its truths are enshrined in our hearts, we may confidently face the future, and not be alarmed by any of the errors and heresies that may spring up around us. The teachers of falsehood are only imitating the folly of the builders of Babel, and all their inventions will but end in their own confusion.

The sun has gone down, and in an hour or two the world will appear in a more somber dress than it now wears. If you come out at midnight, you will see nothing but the twinkling stars and a few glimmering lamps, yet the sun is not put out, his light is not quenched. Wait till the appointed time, and the great light of day shall again be “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.”

Darkness may be covering your mind tonight, darkness may cover your circumstances, darkness may for a while cover even the church of God on earth, but that old promise is still true, “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” Only be sure that you are on the Lord’s side, put your trust in the precious blood of Jesus, and wait for Him more than they that watch for the morning, and then, when He comes, it will be to you a day of light, and not of darkness, and the days of your mourning will have ended forever. So may the Lord comfort your hearts, sustain you under every trial, keep you in His love, and enable you patiently to wait for His coming, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 119:9-32

Verse 9. *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” A vital and solemn question. His way is full of temptations, and he himself has strong passions. How shall he make his way clean, and keep it so? “By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Without heed he will soon be in the mire, but carefully walking with God’s Word as his rule, by the blessing of God’s grace it will keep him out of sin.

10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*

There might be thought in this confession to be some commendation of himself, and therefore he salts it with this prayer, “I have sought Thee, Lord, sincerely, but still, notwithstanding that, I am very apt to stray away, and I shall sadly wander unless Thou keep me. O let me not wander from Thy commandments.”

11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

The best thing put into the best place for the best of all purposes. There is no antidote against sin like the possession of the Word of God in the soul.

12. *Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.*

You are blessed, make me blessed, You are the happy God, instruct me in the way of happiness.

13. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*

I am a learner, but I have tried to be a teacher too, I have not kept the Word of God to myself as though it were only a personal treasure for me, but what I have heard in the secret chamber of fellowship, that have I spoken on the housetops. Have you published abroad what you know? Then you are the person to learn more. When men drop their money into a money box, they have to break it to get it out again, and if they have not need of it they will not do so. God does not care to drop His treasure into a heart that never uses it and imparts it. Let your lips speak what your heart learns.

14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*

If all sorts of riches were put together, I have found them all, and more than them all, in Your testimonies, I am rich in all respects when I have You.

15. *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*

Meditation treads the wine press and gets the juice out of the grapes. A man may read too much if he reads without meditation. "I will meditate." It is the harvesting by reaping of what we have sown by reading.

16. *I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*

I will take a deep pleasure in them, and I will find an intense joy in every pondering of them. "I will not forget thy word." I will never let it go out of the precincts of my memory, I will recall again and again. I will always have a text of thy precious Book ready to my tongue.

17. *Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.*

Give me much of Your comfort, royally of Yourself, deal bountifully with me. I have great necessities, am a mass of wants, therefore, "Deal bountifully with me that I may live." And I have great tendencies to wander. Great risks and perils. Give me abundance of grace that I may keep Your Word.

18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

The wonders are there, cause me to behold them. A man may have a fair landscape before him, rich in all beauties of form and color, but if his eyes be closed, what is he better for it?

19. *I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.*

"I am a stranger in the earth." I do not belong now to it, I am born and bound for heaven, I am a pilgrim here, men do not understand me, neither have I any settled business here. "I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me." Oh, remember that I am Your alien, Your banished one, send me love messages from the old home and loved country.

20. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.*

Broken souls are many, but not on this account! Oh, how few are in danger of breaking through such a longing as this! Would God there were many more that did sigh and cry after the Word of God, for longings such as these are sure to lead to an earnest search, and the earnest search will increase knowledge and increase grace.

21. *Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.*

A proud man is surely a sinful man. He may think himself a righteous man, but he cannot be so. He has gone far astray from the very essence of God's law, which is that he should walk humbly with his God.

22. *Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.*

A man that does that is pretty sure to be reproached and to be contemned by man, for they think that one who follows God faithfully "is very old-fashioned, he has not much spirit, he has not drunk in the philosophy of the age, he is a fossilized Christian," and so on. Well, we can bear all such reproach, still we are truly glad when we escape it.

23. *Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.*

And a great man's word goes a long way with some people. They think a prince a great authority. "But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." He did not burst out in angry reply, he did not give fierce railing for railing, but he sat himself down as quietly as he could, the more abundantly to meditate on God's statutes. What calmness there is here, and what wisdom! for if princes should speak against us,

and the great ones of the earth should rail, what does it matter? If they drive us away from our faith, it would matter, but if they drive us to our Bibles, it is a benefit.

24-25. *Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*

Here he prays for quickening. He felt the spiritual death that was so natural to him, the heaviness of his heart, the tendency to sink, the attractions of the world.

26. *I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.*

Open confession is good for the soul, and I have made this confession, Thou hast heard me, now “teach me thy statutes.”

27. *Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.*

Lord, ground me and found me in Your knowledge, give me to know fully, firmly, what I do know, I would not be as a man that eats, but thinks not whence the bread came, but I would wish to understand the way of Your precepts, “so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.”

28. *My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.*

Will not this prayer suit some that are in this house this evening who are very dull and depressed? Oh, if your soul sinks, still pray and say, “Strengthen thou me.” You want strength, dear friends. If you had more strength, your troubles would not crush you, your soul would not melt if you had more strength and confidence.

29-30. *Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.*

As a captain lays out his chart so as to keep his course correctly and safely, so I try to sail by it. I have chosen Your law, and precept, and command as my course, and I would fain keep to them.

31. *I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.*

I am glued to them, there is no separating me, no tearing me apart from them. “O LORD, put me not to shame.”

32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

I will go quicker and faster, I will have more energy, more flaming zeal, in Your service—“When thou shalt enlarge my heart.” O Lord, it is very narrow and very contracted, I cannot think great thoughts, nor do great things, nor believe great promises, unless You shall enlarge my heart. Lord, give me a larger heart, stronger to obey, more tender to love, for Thy name’s sake!

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.